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## ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY OPERATION ON THE GALL BLADDER.\*

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**I**T would be easy to decide upon the method of procedure in treating diseased conditions of the upper abdominal cavity were the diagnosis clear. Unfortunately the diagnosis often is extremely difficult and doubtful. If the difficulty in diagnosis leads to delay in the employment of proper methods of relief, and this delay results in complications which render the delayed methods more dangerous and less effective, there are certainly urgent reasons for us to seek early methods of diagnosis and treatment.

I think I shall best show my appreciation of the courteous invitation of your President to speak to you to-day by condensing what I have to say into a few words. I shall not, therefore, enter upon an exhaustive discussion of my theme, but shall confine what I have to say to a short statement of conclusions based upon my own clinical experience. In doing this I shall cite a few cases selected from many, simply as illustrations. The difficulties of diagnosis pertain chiefly, in the first place, to uncertainty as to the presence or absence of malignant disease, whether of stomach, gall bladder or liver; second, to uncertainty as to the presence or absence of gall stones or inflammatory conditions of the biliary tract; and third, to the association of inflammatory adhesions which may result from certain of the foregoing diseased conditions. I shall not consider acute inflammation of the pancreas nor cysts of that viscus or of the lesser omental bursa, interesting as these may be. I shall omit also a consideration of diseased conditions of the stomach associated with gasterectasis, whether resulting from carcinoma, non-malignant stricture of the pylorus or other causes whatsoever. If these cases are malignant, diagnosis is usually too late to make operation of benefit, and if non-malignant I am of the positive opinion that such cases should be referred to our medical confrères, who now accomplish so much by lavage, proper diet, medication, rest and recreation. It is time

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